



HIKING – FOREST SERVICE – ROCKY MOUNTAIN REGION
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

NATIONAL FOREST – San Juan RANGER DISTRICT - Columbine

Updated: February, 2003



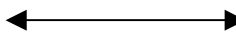
ELBERT CREEK TRAIL #512

Length: 9.9 miles (15.8 km.)

Use: Medium

Recommended Season

Spring Summer Fall Winter



Difficulty: More difficult

USGS Map (s): Electra Lake and Elk Creek .

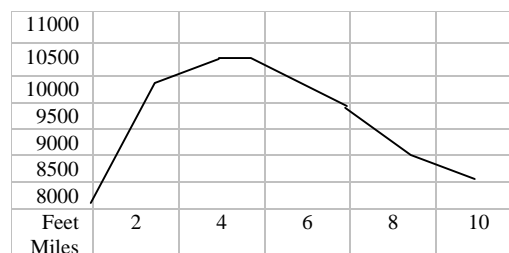
Starting Elevation: 8,000'

From trailhead near
Needles Country Store

Ending Elevation: 8,400'

Hermosa Creek

Recommended Season: Spring/ Summer/Fall



Access: # 1 22 miles north of Durango on U.S. 550, turn off the highway southwest of the Needles Country Store. The trailhead is at the corrals. Be sure to close the gates as you go through. Ample parking is available.

Access # 2: Turn off onto FDR #578, 29 miles north of Durango on U.S. 550, and follow 2½ miles to a fork in the road. Take a left turn onto FDR #581 and follow for about 3 miles to where Elbert Creek and the trail cross the road.

Access # 3: Access is available via the Hermosa Creek Trail. Follow FDR #578 for approximately 9 miles to the Hermosa Creek trailhead in Hermosa Park. Follow the trail roughly 5 miles downstream to the Big Lick Creek and Elbert Creek Trail junction.

Scan of the San Juan National Forest Map

Forest Service maps and other publications are available at the Public Lands Center, in the Durango Tech Center, ½ mile west of Durango off Highway 160, or by calling (970) 247-4874.
www.sjma.org

Attractions & Considerations : The trail is access into the Hermosa Creek drainage. From the Needles Country Store, the trail climbs steadily uphill on an east-facing slope inhabited by aspens. A spring surfaces near the cabin at the base of Castle Rock. From there, the trail curves around the base of Castle Rock and continues to climb. The trail then crosses access road #581 and climbs a small hill, traversing beautiful, scenic meadows. The trail then abruptly drops for some 7 miles into the Hermosa Creek drainage. Water is available, but requires filtering to prevent possible Giardia.